

American Academy of Pediatrics



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Dear Colleague:

We know that cigarettes are a health hazard to those who smoke them. But some smokers may not know about the health hazards they cause for those around them. Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) harms those who breathe it. And it is children who face the greatest health risk from ETS, also known as secondhand smoke..

Thirty-eight percent of children aged two months to five years are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke in the home. Many young children spend a large proportion of their time indoors. That means millions of young children are spending that time exposed to environmental tobacco smoke.

Each year, ETS exposure is linked to

- Up to 2 million cases of chronic middle ear effusion in children
- Nearly 530,000 doctor visits for asthma
- Up to 436,000 episodes of bronchitis in children under 5 years of age
- Up to 190,000 cases of pneumonia in children under 5 years of age

This is why the American Academy of Pediatrics has joined with the Environmental Protection Agency to create this speaker's kit, *Secondhand Smoke: A Health Hazard to Children*. The kit includes information about the dangers from in-home exposure to ETS,

I urge you to make full use of this speaker's kit at PTA meetings, hospitals, school board meetings, appropriate community interest groups and, of course, with your patients -- anywhere you can spread the word about ETS and other indoor air issues.

With your help getting the message out, we can help to ensure that the air our children breathe is smoke-free, clean, and safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel J. Alpert M.D.".

Joel J. Alpert, M.D., FAAP
President, American Academy of Pediatrics